



## Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

— Making a positive difference through education and service —

December 4, 2002

Dear Superintendent and Library Media Specialist:

A little over five years ago, I sent superintendents and library media specialists a letter concerning the "new" *Standards for School Library Media Centers* (1996). During the past five years, I have talked with to numerous education groups about how to interpret and implement these standards at the building and district level. It is time to send another comprehensive letter to notify you of the 2002 *Standards for School Library Media Centers*, provide information concerning required building improvement collection plans, explain misconceptions about the standards, and to convey my thanks and congratulations.

### **Standards for School Library Media Centers**

The *Standards for School Library Media Centers* have been reviewed twice since the 1996 implementation. The Department is committed to a three-year review cycle. The first revision was very limited. The main change involved reducing the number of square feet recommended for the ancillary (office, workroom, storage, etc.) space of the library media center. The second revision took effect July 2002. The revised *Standards for School Library Media Centers* are available on the Department's web site <http://www.dese.state.mo.us/divimprove/curriculum/lmcindex.htm>. The revisions included wording clarification, added information concerning the building collection improvement plan, and an increase in the number of fiction resources for all grade levels. These revisions were the result of information collected over the past three years.

### **Building Collection Improvement Plans**

Though great improvements have been made in the school library collections in the state, there is much yet to be accomplished. In section 6.8.4 of the third-cycle Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP) Standards and Indicators, a building collection improvement plan is required. Third-cycle MSIP Indicator 6.8.4 also requires the inclusion of library collection improvements in the district's Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP). The MSIP review team examines the documentation for proof of continuous improvement on the building collection improvement plan.

The basic steps in developing a building collection improvement plan are:

1. determining current quantities of each of the sections in the collection (use worksheets in *Standards for School Library Media Centers*),
2. submitting quantitative information to the Department through Core Data (June),
3. evaluating the quality of the resources in the collection. (evaluation includes checking the alignment of resources to the curriculum, copyright date, accuracy of the information, condition of the resources, etc.),
4. identifying areas of weakness in the collection,
5. identifying areas of strength in the collection,
6. developing a concise building collection improvement plan,
7. presenting the plan to administrators and discussing plan implementation, and
8. maintaining qualitative data documenting the continuous progress of the plan.

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The building collection improvement plan should be developed with input as possible from faculty and staff. The plan needs to be specific concerning the areas of resource improvement and the amount of improvement attainable on an annual basis.

1. How many resources can realistically be gained every year?
2. How much will the annual gain cost?
3. What sources of funds will be used?

The library media specialist should develop and present the plan to the building or district administrator in charge of budgets and discuss implementation. The cost of the plan is in addition to the typical, annual library media center budget, **not** in place of it. If the typical, annual budget is used to address the building collection improvement plan, other areas of the collection will deteriorate and the overall quality will suffer.

### **Misconceptions**

Some have believed that the building collection improvement plan must address at least one of the 11 time-sensitive Dewey decimal areas (identified in the *Standards for School Library Media Centers*). The building collection improvement plan should address the area of resources needed in the building library media center. The state has not pre-determined an area of the collection for improvement. It is a building decision based on the need of the curriculum, students, and staff. Please do not waste money on unneeded items so a number on a Core Data report looks superior. Please plan and spend the budget to support the curriculum and student and staff interests.

The focus of the standards is **quality**, with quantitative measures set as goals for all school library media centers. It is better to have a smaller, quality collection with accurate, timely information aligned to the curriculum and needs of the students and staff, than to have high quantities just to match numbers on a piece of paper.

Due to the concentrated efforts of library media specialists and administrators, many school library media center collections have improved since 1996 when the standards were implemented. As I travel the state, library media specialists tell me about the improvements in communication, planning, and the collection. These improvements are wonderful news for the students of Missouri. Quality library media center collections are needed to help raise achievement levels and to provide students a way to enjoy reading, listening, and discovering. Thank you for supporting quality library media center collections.

I am including a copy of the original letter, dated June 4, 1997, for those of you new to your position. I am also including a sample building collection improvement plan in the event you should need it. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions concerning the *Standards for School Library Media Centers* or any other matters concerning school library media centers. I welcome any questions and input you may have. You may email me at [lwalters@mail.dese.state.mo.us](mailto:lwalters@mail.dese.state.mo.us) or call at 573.526.4900.

Sincerely,

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Enclosures